Government of India in accordance with the approved guidelines/procedures for such schemes for sanction and release of necessary funds. The approved package also stipulates that the programmes/interventions involving financial outlay upto Rs. 50 lakhs will be implemented by the State Government of Kerala from their own funds under their schemes.

Quality testing of food served in hotels and dhabas

†*408. SHRI SATYAVRAT CHATURVEDI:
SHRI MOTILAL VORA:

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the test of the quality of food served at hotels and dhabas is not carried out by Government from time to time;

(b) whether Government's attention has been drawn towards the report of the survey carried out by the Indian Toxicology Research Institute, Lucknow in 2008 according to which dye Sudan-I and Sudan- 4, which are dangerous for health, have been used to adulterate red chilly powder used in several dhabas; and

(c) if so, the steps being taken by Government against the companies producing adulterated spices and dhabas which use them?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD): (a) to (c) The implementation of Prevention of Food Adulteration Act (PFA), 1954 and Rules, 1955 is entrusted to the Food Health Authorities of the State/U.T. Governments. The enforcement staff of the Food Health Authorities draw random samples of different food articles from all sources *viz.* manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers and also from hotels and dhabas and get them analysed to see whether the samples confirm to the standards laid down under the PFA Rules, 1955 and other provisions of PFA Act, 1954.

Survey studies conducted at Indian Institute of Toxicology Research Lucknow, showed presence of harmful dyes, Sudan-1 and Sudan-4 in non-branded loose chilly powder samples with a range of 0.2-11.7 mg./g. but none of the branded chilly powder samples were found to contain these dyes. None of these chilly powder samples were taken from dhabas/hotels.

Action against persons engaged in such adulteration of food items is taken by the concerned State Governments under the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act 1954.

Adverse effect of less rain in agricultural production

†*409. SHRI PRABHAT JHA:
SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that agricultural production is likely to be affected adversely due to shortage of rainfall in the country;

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) whether Government has made any assessment to ascertain the likely fall in agricultural production due to shortage of rainfall;

(c) if so, the details thereof, State-wise;

(d) the details of economic losses likely to be suffered by States as a result thereof;

(e) whether Government proposes to provide any economic assistance to the affected States; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) Agriculture production is dependent on various factors such as climatic and edaphic conditions, area coverage, application of required inputs at appropriate time etc. With improvement in monsoon, the sowing/crop coverage of jowar, bajra maize, small millets, oilseeds and cotton has improved. However, there is a decrease in Paddy area mainly in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bangal and Chhattisgarh that may adversely impact the production of paddy. As on 27th July, the area coverage under paddy is 168.34 lakh ha, which is 54.68 lakh ha. less than last year's coverage of 223.12 lakh ha. IMD's long range forecast for the 2009 south-west monsoon season (June-September) for the country as a whole was likely near normal. Quantitatively, monsoon season rainfall is likely to be 96% of the long period average with a model error of +-5 %. For the period ending 22.7.2009, the percent departure of rainfall was (-19%).

(b) and (c) It is too early to assess the likely fall in agriculture production. Ministry of Agriculture has been constantly monitoring the sowing progress and providing required technical advice to the states through regular video conferences, meetings and telephonic discussions. Contingency plans suitable to specific agro climatic conditions have been prepared. Under the contingency plans- replacement of main crop with alternate crops like, millets, oil seeds, pulses; planning for short duration varieties of the main crop; planning for protective irrigation by efficient use of available water; and Promoting Technical Package of Practice like direct sowing, less plant spacing, more seed rate etc. are being recommended.

(d) to (f) As mentioned earlier it is too early to assess the economic losses. However, States have been given flexibility to utilise the funds provided under Crop Development programs of Ministry of Agriculture such as Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana, National Food Security Mission to meet the contingent situations in the event of deficient rainfall, particularly for purchase and distribution of additional quantity of seeds, support for micro-irrigation, etc. An amount of Rs. 271.31 crores has been released to the States of Assam, Bihar, Manipur and Uttar Pradesh as a central share of Calamity Relief Fund (CRF). Additional assistance is also provided from National Calamity Contingency Fund (NCCF) on submission of memorandum for assistance by the affected States.